

Ten (free!) productivity tools for editors – Part 2 of 2

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Time – something we wish we had more of, yet we all have the same 24 hours per day. So, how to make the best use of them? Hello, productivity tools! These days there is an app or tool for everything, so let's look at some productivity tools that can streamline your work as an editor.

Text expanders: **aText**

Do you find yourself typing the same email message over and over again? Or writing the same author query *ad nauseam*? Then **aText** will become your best friend. Think of this tool as your own personalised form of digital shorthand. You might write the phrases 'Please see attached the requested file' or 'I'll get back to you' or 'Thanks so much' dozens of times a week. Using a shortcut for these phrases will save hours in otherwise lost productivity.

With this app, I use my personal shortcut of '.stq', which stands for 'sworn translation quote', to provide the client with the necessary information (as in the screenshot) without having to type a rather long response. The same goes for author queries while editing, where you can set up shortcuts for often-repeated comments. The app works in most email clients, such as Gmail and Outlook, as well as in the editor's best (or worst!) friend, Microsoft Word.

Other free text expanders to try: **PhraseExpress**, **AutoHotkey**, **espanso**.

PDF conversion: **PDF Candy**

Still counting words manually in a PDF? Nobody's got time for that! It's useful to know the word count of a PDF when you have to provide a proofreading quote and the client insists on a rate per word. PDF conversion to Microsoft Word also helps when you want to use consistency software such as PerfectIt or macros, as these tools don't work in PDF documents. **PDF Candy** is one such converter for use in your browser or as a desktop app. As with all free PDF conversion software, there are certain limitations to keep in mind. Although this app contains 44 different PDF tools and even allows for OCR in more than 10 languages, you are limited to the processing of only two tasks every two hours.

Microsoft Word (from the 2016 version onwards) also has the ability to convert PDFs to Word, although it struggles when dealing with a graphic-heavy or especially long document. Automatic word-counting apps, such as **CountAnything**, **Translator's Abacus** and **abracadabraTools**, are other alternatives for getting a quick ballpark word count of your PDF, if conversion is not your main concern.

Other free PDF converters to try: **iLovePDF**, **AltoPDFtoWord**, **PDF2Go**.

Password management: **LastPass**

With the POPI Act now being a reality for many businesses in South Africa – editors as sole proprietors included – data security and protecting your own information and that of your clients has never been more important. One easy way of protecting unauthorised access to accounts and other documents include using strong password protection. But hands up if you have ever been confronted by a login screen just to scramble around and wrack your brain for that elusive password. Never mind not being able to remember the name of your ex's sister's childhood dog as the answer to a security question!

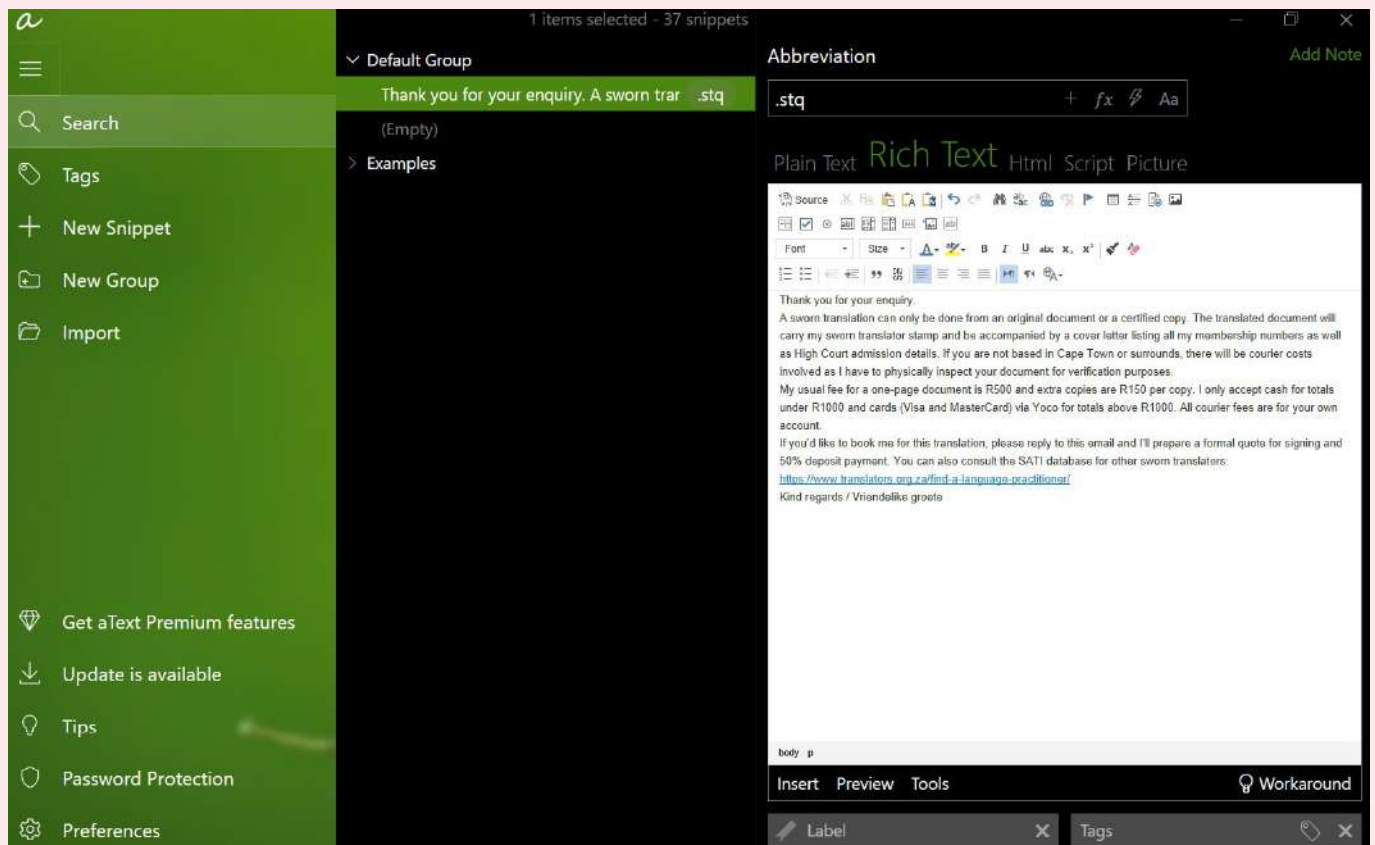
With **LastPass**, you need to remember only one master password. The app will not only keep all your passwords in a secure vault, but will also generate long, randomised passwords when you want to register a new account online. No need to scratch your head and waste time finding those odd combinations of uppercase and lowercase letters, symbols, numbers and the answer to 'life, the universe and everything'.

Other free password managers to try: **Bitwarden**, **LogMeOnce**, **Dashlane**.

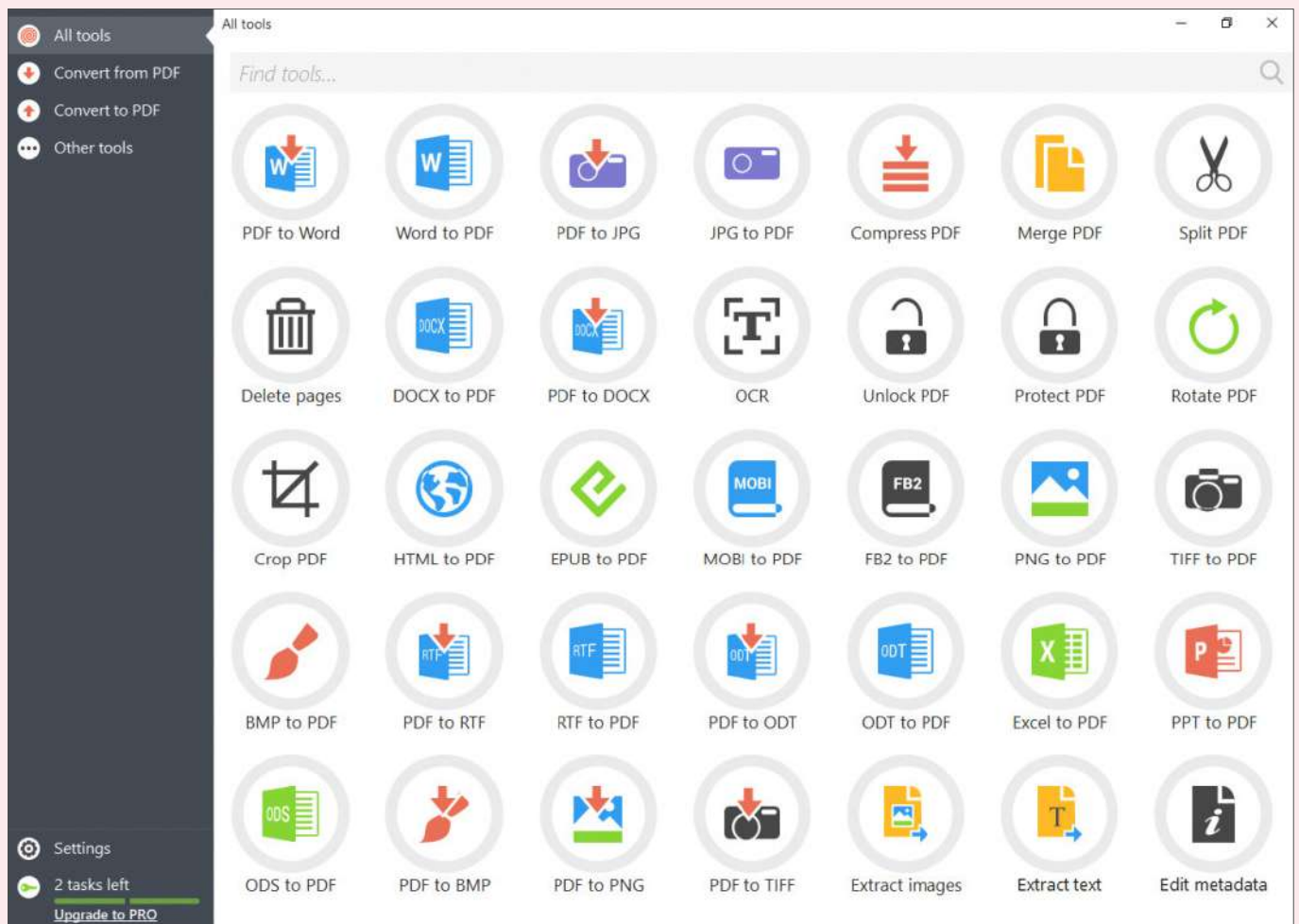
Combating information overload: **Feedly**

Just as you might struggle to remember all your passwords if you don't use a password manager, it's hard work these days to try to keep up with the vast ocean of useful information out there, while drowning out the 'noise' of the internet. Using a feed reader or news aggregator to follow specific trade or news publications, blogs, research journals, Reddit communities and even YouTube channels is the closest thing to having the web all in one place. Instead of visiting multiple websites, **Feedly** allows you to follow up to 100 sources and organise them into three feeds, making it much easier to keep up with your favourite writers, topics or industries.

This app is perfect for editors who want to use it as a research hub or to generate ideas for their own blog or LinkedIn posts, as it also allows for integration with note-taking apps such as Evernote or OneNote. It's also the best option for getting away from algorithm-defined news timelines to curate content you *genuinely* care about. ➔



Never repeat yourself with aText



Make light work of conversion with PDF Candy

Auto-pilot for all your passwords
LastPass removes obstacles, letting you get back to the things you love most.

Log in and go
Once you save a password in LastPass, you'll always have it when you need it: logging in is fast and easy.

Simplify online shopping
When you're ready to make a purchase, your profile will fill all your payment and shipping details for you.

Generate strong passwords
The built-in password generator creates long, randomized passwords that protect against hacking.

Store digital records
Insurance cards, memberships, Wi-Fi passwords... keep all your notes safe and easy to find.

Share effortlessly
Some things shouldn't be sent in a text. Conveniently and safely share passwords and notes with anyone.

Dark web monitoring
Stop worrying about data breaches. Get alerts if your personal information is at risk.

Protect what's important with LastPass

Editing

MOST POPULAR

Book titles — more than just a name
21 Blood-Red Pencils / 18d
How do you choose the title of your book? Do you write the story, then give it a name? Or does the title come first and the story...

Authenticity reading. Part 1: What editors need to know
CIEP blog / 19d
Authenticity reading, often called sensitivity reading, is a service that all editors should know about, because it plays a valuable...

"Whoever/Whomever" in Fiction: Which Should Your Character Use?
The Subversive Copy Editor Blog / 26d
Recently, a question that went something like this appeared in a Facebook group for writers seeking help from book editors:

What is narrative distance?
Louise Hentley / 1d
Find out what narrative distance is and why fiction editors and authors need to pay attention to it. What's in this post... Are

Small Press Publishing: A Glimpse Into the Industry
Bridget / 1d
Join Editors Toronto on Tuesday, October 26, at 7:00 pm EST via Zoom for "" In this month's program, join us and our panel to

BLOGGING TIPS FOR EDITORS AND AUTHORS #1: WITH CAROL SALLER
Louise Hentley / 5d
Subversive copy editor Carol Saller offers yet more top tips on blogging for editors, proofreaders and writers! Join Carol.

What is Plain Language? Part 3: When You Assume ...
The Editors Weekly / 6d
Copyright: grovms This is the third in a series of articles discussing the basic principles of plain language by Aaron

Editor for Life: Peter Sobchak, Editor in Chief, Canadian Interiors/Building
Bridget / 11d
Interview conducted by Alice Minda. A career as an editor is often a solo adventure, especially if you're a freelancer.

Feedly: for news your way

1 Find new projects
Use the Guild job portal to find work that aligns with your skillset and passions.

2 Manage your finances
Dominate your taxes by tracking your business and personal expenses.

3 Make billing a breeze
Create, manage and issue your client invoices from directly within the app.

4 Access free resources
From contracts to calendars, our library of downloadable will help you succeed.

5 Stay current with fresh insights
Top tips and blog posts to help you level-up your freelancing game.

6 Join a supportive community
Become a member of our exclusive Facebook community and network with fellow freelancers.

Make getting paid easy with Guild

Other free news aggregators to try: Pocket, The Old Reader, NewsBlur.

Invoicing: Guild

I did the work; now show me the money! We all want to get paid for our editing work, so what's an easy way to set up and send estimates and invoices? **Guild** is a homegrown South African app that not only serves as a tool for quoting and invoicing, but also offers a job platform where clients can advertise and freelancers can find opportunities. The app, which is currently available only for download on your phone, also has a blog with relevant articles such as 'Don't dig the job? Here's how to politely turn down a freelance gig.'

Some editors find invoicing and the admin side of running a freelance business quite a chore. Using an app to automate these tasks will free up your time to spend on what you *actually* want to do: more editing!

Other free invoicing apps to try: Akaunting, Zoho Invoice, Bookipi.

Making AI work for you

Tracking and managing your time is an intensely personal activity. Some of us, who became editors when dial-up internet was still a thing (or even before that!), tend to shy away from what machines can do for us. But, IMHO, the only way to make any kind of decent living as an editor these days is to invest in digital efficiencies and use as many tools possible to maximise productivity, so that you have sufficient time to work not only *in* your business, but also *on* your business.

Be that brave editor and try some of the tools in this article to see if they make a difference to your productivity as an editor. Just remember the golden rule of any system or tool: Never make anything more complicated than it absolutely has to be, otherwise you won't stick to it! 🌱

References

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Laetitia is a SATI-accredited sworn translator admitted to the High Court and a bilingual language practitioner with 18 years' experience, mainly in trade and educational publishing. Her loves are tech, pugs, books and wine – mostly at the same time.